REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 10, and 11 are pending in the present application after this amendment cancels claim 9. Claims 1 and 10 are amended to further clarify the patentable subject matter in a good faith effort to bring the prosecution of this case to a conclusion. No new matter is added by the amendment, which finds support throughout the specification and figures. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, favorable reconsideration of this case is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 6,016,317 to Sakurai et al. (hereinafter Sakurai) in view of United States Patent No.6,185,209 to Wicklund (hereinafter Wicklund). Claims 9 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakurai in view of United States Patent No. 5,535,197 to Cotton (hereinafter Cotton). Claim 9 has been canceled and claim 1 has been amended to include the features of canceled claim 9, and therefore claim 1 is discussed in the context of the rejection of claim 9. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of the claims.

Amended claim 1 is directed to a common buffer memory control apparatus controlling a common buffer memory which is used to store message data items each of which is divided into a plurality of cells based on an asynchronous transfer mode. The apparatus according to claim 1 includes, *inter alia*, user management means for managing the blocks of the common buffer memory by a user management table in which *a block storing a head cell positioned at a head of the message data corresponds to user identification information extracted from the head cell*. Amended claim 1 also includes cell writing control means for controlling a write operation for the single message data item so that the respective cells of the single message data item are

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accumulated in the one block, selected by the block selecting means, of the common buffer memory. In amended claim 1, the *cell writing control means controls, based on information obtained by the user management means, the write operation so that each of cells positioned in mid-portion of the message data is written in the block corresponding to the user identification information* extracted from the each of the cells.

In Sakurai, a pointer chain is applied, and is therefore different from the common buffer 13 of the present invention. The Examiner admits that Sakurai does not disclose the above italicized feature of amended claim 1 (formerly claim 9). (Office Action; page 6, lines 11-12). In Wicklund, a series of cells are queued into several merge queue VCs 140(1)-(3), which is also different from the common buffer 13 of the present invention. Therefore, the present invention according to amended claim 1 is distinguishable over Sakurai and Wicklund. The Examiner cites Cotton as disclosing the feature of claim 9, now canceled, that is incorporated in amended claim 1.

The Examiner asserts that Cotton discloses the common memory buffer control apparatus of this claim in cell manager 13. (Office Action; page 6, lines 12-13). This reference is presumably to cell manager 130 of Cotton, but clarification is requested in the next communication to Applicants. However, the buffer memory allocation linked list, which the Examiner asserts discloses the feature of the user management means of amended claim 1, does not function in the manner recited in the claim.

Regarding amended claim 1, the respective cells of the single message data item are accumulated in one block, selected by the block selecting means, of the common buffer memory. Each of the cells positioned in a mid-portion of the message data is written in the block corresponding to the user identification information extracted from the each of the cells.

In contrast, Cotton applies a pointer chain to store a single data item. Thus, the single data item is divided into a plurality of buffers which are chained each to another. If a communication error occurs such that a start of cell is received prior to an end of cell, several buffers may be assigned to the same single data item. In this manner, a series of chained buffers may not be read out if the error occurs and the single data item is not completely stored. As a result, addresses to be used as pointers for saving the single data item may not be used again.

On the other hand, in the present invention, the common buffer 13 is segmented into a plurality of blocks, and the *single data item* is stored accumulated in one block of the common buffer 13. Thus, a pointer chain management such as Cotton is not required. Accordingly, if the communication error described above occurs, the common buffer 13 can be simply cleared after the single data item is stored in the message queue 15, and the above-described problem is not caused. (Specification; page 9; lines 10-33).

Therefore, Cotton does not disclose or suggest cell writing control means that controls a write operation so that *each of cells positioned in a mid-portion of the message data is written in the block* corresponding to the user identification information. Therefore, since none of the references discloses or suggests this feature, the combination of the references does not render claim 1 unpatentable.

Claims 2-8, 10, and 11 depend from claim 1 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1 is allowable.
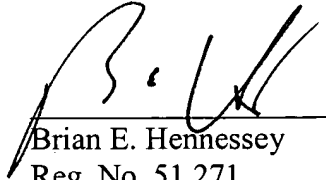
CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner

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should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully

requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a

further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,

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